



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department Of Agriculture Rural Development
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USDA Rural Development Value-Added Grants Help Bring Alternative Uses and New Markets To Local Producers

Superior, Neb., December 12, 2005-USDA Rural Development's Scot Blehm, state director for Nebraska, presented Meyer Vineyards, Inc. and Beaver Creek Partners, LLC with symbolic value-added producer grant (VAPG) checks today. The monies will help these producers to expand the customer base for their commodities through a value-added activity that allows them to retain a greater profit in the marketplace.

"Value-added grants help to find alternative uses for agriculture products and locate new marketplaces in which to sell those products," stated Blehm. "Meyer Vineyards, Inc. and Beaver Creek Partners, LLC's proposed value-added ventures will provide for new sources of revenue to the area. These projects will keep more of the commodities' profits at home benefiting the local rural economy."

Meyer Vineyards, Inc. of Superior, Neb. will use the \$150,000 value-added grant to produce and market premium wines from their 10 varieties of grapes. The wines will be promoted within a 100 mile radius of Superior. The vineyard/winery's atmosphere will also be marketed as part of the drawing card to locals, travelers and tourists. Increased revenue will be realized from the wine sales at an estimated rate of five times over the sale of grapes, keeping more of the commodity's profit at home. The area's economy will be impacted as 75 percent of the employees will be hired locally. Additional monies will be brought into the area as visitors of the winery buy other goods and services locally.

"Meyer Vineyards' goal is to produce premium wine in the state of Nebraska," stated Randy Meyer, president for Meyer Vineyards, Inc. "The USDA grant will provide a tremendous boost in helping us to obtain our objectives. It will assist us in utilizing a leading enologist and experts in the industry to assure a top quality product and to expand our marketing campaign to promote our premium wines and new facilities."

Beaver Creek Partners, LLC of Sutton, Neb. will use the \$150,000 value-added grant to accelerate the marketing and promotion of Deering Bridge Farms' brand of pork products. Increased returns resulting from heightened marketing efforts would be distributed back to the owner/producers of Beaver Creek Partners, LLC, keeping more of the commodity's profit at home.

"We are extremely pleased and consider ourselves very fortunate to be among the recipients of the USDA value-added grants," stated Jay Eckhardt, member of Beaver Creek Partners, LLC. "The funds will enable us to advance our marketing and promotional efforts far beyond what we could have accomplished on our own."

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Statewide, value-added grants in Fiscal Year 2005 totaling \$1,113,540 assisted 16 producers in value-added ventures. The 2002 Farm Bill made available monies for value-added projects. Since the beginning of the VAPG program, Nebraska has received over \$7.7 million assisting in 54 value-added ventures.

For additional information contact Deb Yocum, 201 N. 25 Street Beatrice, Neb. 69310, debra.yocum@ne.usda.gov, (402) 223-3125, (402) 437-5093 (TDY). Visit <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ne/>.

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